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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 75/NO. 9 MARCH 7, 2011

INSIDE

Book on U.S. class struggle presented at Havana Fair

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Egypt's military demands strikes end

BY SETH GALINSKY

For the sixth time since taking power after the fall of Hosni Mubarak, Egypt's Supreme Military Council issued a directive February 18 for workers to end strikes and sit-ins. If they don't they "will be confronted and legal steps will be taken against them to protect the security of the nation," the generals threatened. But new strikes and sit-ins continue to take place daily, as well as protests by farmers.

On February 21 *Al Masry Al Youm* reported that workers at seven power plants held sit-ins and demonstrations. According to the newspaper, workers decided to sit-in so that work can continue while they press their demands for wage increases, permanent jobs for temporary workers, dismissal of corrupt officials at the electrical ministry, and resignation of the head of the Egyptian Electric Holding Company.

Banks reopened February 20. The Central Bank had closed all banks February 14 after bank workers went on strike. Protesting bank employees are now electing representatives to negotiate with government officials. According to *Al Ahram* newspaper, workers at Banque Misr, Egypt's second largest bank, refused demands by the Central Bank to name bank man-

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Wisconsin union rally slams anti-worker bill

Militant/Laura Anderson

Tens of thousands of workers, farmers, and students have protested for more than a week at the state capitol in Madison, Wisconsin, against attacks on union rights for public workers.

'Workers have to back each other'

BY DENNIS RICHTER AND FRANK FORRESTAL

MADISON, Wisconsin—Tens of thousands of union members and supporters, including a large number of students, rallied at the state capitol here February 19, to protest the union-busting "Budget Repair" bill proposed by Wisconsin Republican

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Build solidarity, sell the 'Militant'!

The *Militant* newspaper applauds the tens of thousands across Wisconsin who have mobilized at the state capitol this past week to defend working people and thwart union-busting

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

legislation. It is the first major mobilization of working people since the capitalist crisis dramatically worsened in early 2008.

The fighting example of workers in Wisconsin is picking up the spirit

Continued on page 9

Civil war opens in Libya as revolt grows

BY CINDY JAQUITH

February 23—As the *Militant* goes to press a civil war is raging across Libya. A revolt by workers, farmers, youth, and other layers of the population has split the military and is threatening the 41-year rule of Col. Moammar Gadhafi. Forces of the regime are no longer in control of the eastern half of the country, which includes many of Libya's largest cities.

Gadhafi is desperately trying to hold onto power as opposition to his increasingly brutal regime grows and he is more and more isolated.

In less than a week, demonstrators in Libya's second largest city, Benghazi, have expelled pro-government security forces and taken control of the streets. A substantial section of the army and police commanders broke with the central government and refused to crush the demonstrators. Soldiers gave out weapons to civilians.

Gadhafi has long relied on militia groups to maintain power, instead of a large centralized army. In the face of his fierce crackdown against the uprising, many soldiers and even entire units have sided with the rebellion.

The forces heading the resistance in Benghazi called for a secular interim government led by the army and leaders of Libya's tribes, according to the *New York Times*. Lt. Col. Mohamed Saber, one of the army officers involved, called on the UN to "intervene to save us, before they fire at us

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Houston meeting denounces brutality by police department

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

HOUSTON—More than 500 people protesting police brutality met at the Community of Faith Church here February 15. Dozens lined up to speak about harassment, beatings, taserings, and shootings they have experienced at the hands of the Houston and Harris County police.

Chad Holley, 15, was beaten by Houston police in March 2010.

The meeting was the latest in a series of protests over the past few weeks since release of a video showing Chad Holley, a 15-year-old African American, being brutally beaten on March 24, 2010, by several cops while lying on the ground with his hands behind his head.

The video had previously been suppressed by the city and a federal judge. Holley, who was convicted on a burglary charge, was prohibited from showing it at his trial. Since its release, a second video has been shown on TV of a cop beating Henry Madge, 27, in a hospital waiting room two years ago.

Family members of at least two prisoners who died in Harris County jail since the beginning of the year have also raised questions about treatment that led to their deaths.

Eric Lomax, a 38-year-old truck

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Hundreds protest decision to not prosecute Seattle cop

BY CECELIA MORIARITY

SEATTLE—Hundreds protested here February 16 the decision by King County prosecutor Dan Satterberg not to prosecute Seattle police officer Ian Birk for gunning down John T. Williams on August 30. Williams, 50, was a woodcarver and member of one of Canada's First Nation tribes.

The prosecutor's decision was made hours after a scathing report by the Seattle Police Department Firearms Review Board. The board found the Williams shooting "unjustified." Birk resigned just hours after its findings were released.

An inquest jury in January had also concluded the officer faced no imminent threat from Williams, who was walking across an intersection with his carving knife and a block of wood when he was killed.

The county prosecutor said that "however tragic the outcome might be" state law prevents him from filing criminal charges because it couldn't

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Black farmers discuss USDA discrimination

BY JACOB PERASSO

ALBANY, Georgia—More than 250 Black farmers and others met here February 12 at the 28th Annual Georgia Farmers Conference. They came from South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia, many joining the discussion on how to fight ongoing discrimination against Black farmers. The conference was organized by the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund.

Farmer James Hunt spoke from the floor of the conference about difficulties in getting credit from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), noting how credit scores are used to deny loans to farmers. Another participant said there are no Black faces in rural USDA offices. "I know they qualify" for the jobs, she added.

Some 14,000 complaints of discrimination were filed with the USDA between 2001 and 2008. Lloyd Wright, an adviser to Secretary of Agriculture Thomas Vilsack, told the conference the USDA believes only 3,800 should be settled, and the statute of limitations had expired on most of them. It will take an act of Congress to pass an extension in order to resolve them, he said.

In 1999 Black farmers' claims of decades of discrimination by the USDA were upheld in federal court. The *Pigford v. Glickman* settlement ordered the government to give claimants a $50,000 payment, debt forgiveness, and preferential treatment in future loan applications. Of the 22,547 claims that were considered, 41 percent were denied. Many farmers didn't even learn about the settlement until after the initial deadline, resulting in some 75,000 claims being filed "late." Only 2,200 of these were considered for compensation as part of the 1999 settlement.

Phil Fraas, an attorney in the *Pigford* case, said that it will be several months before a six-month period begins where all farmers who filed "late" and were not considered before will have to file another claim.

Lawsuits on behalf of Native American and Latino farmers who have been discriminated against have followed the fight of the Black farmers. Ramiro Vega, a farmer who came to the conference from Ashburn, Georgia, explained that he has been denied loans several times and suspects it is because he is Latino.

Vega also said that his mother, Beatrice Vega, was denied a USDA loan in Turner County, Georgia, 11 times between 2006 and 2010, She has a pending civil case against the USDA for discrimination.

"We are tired of being discriminated against," Beatrice Vega told the *Militant* in a phone interview. "We are the only Latino farmers in the area." Seeing the unity of Black farmers in pressing their fight, "I finally got the courage to go to the office of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives and this was the first conference we attended," she said.

Militant/Jacob Perasso

Farmer from Petal, Mississippi, comments during discussion on *Pigford* lawsuit settlement at 28th Georgia Annual Farmers Conference, February 12, in Albany, Georgia.

Arizona plan to cut 250,000 from Medicaid okayed

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The U.S. Health and Human Services department has given the green light to the Arizona state government to slash 250,000 people from its Medicaid rolls.

Barack Obama appointee Kathleen Sebelius, the department secretary, wrote Arizona governor Janice Brewer February 15 to say that the state government needed no federal approval to drop the patients when the program they are in expires next September. The 250,000 are in the "childless adults" category and thus coverage is not mandatory.

Under the health-care "reform" law passed last year, states are supposedly required to maintain current government-run Medicaid health-insurance coverage in order to continue receiving federal funds. But when Brewer asked Sebelius for approval of a plan to terminate coverage for the 250,000, the secretary wrote back that none was needed. She advised the governor to simply allow their coverage to lapse next September.

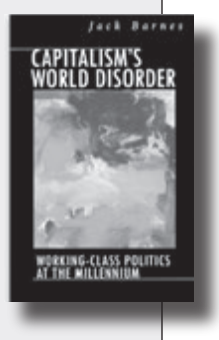
Arizona is one of several state governments seeking to take advantage of the health department's offer to assist states in making big cuts to Medicaid without violating federal law.

Sebelius noted that the Arizona government in the last year previously won her department's approval for other cuts, including ending coverage of most pancreas, lung, heart, and liver transplants; eliminating coverage of preventative dental care, crowns, fillings, root canals, and dentures; and sharply reducing physicals, hospice services, and occupational therapy.

"Arizona is a leader, particularly with respect to its managed care initiatives," the health secretary said in her letter.

In addition, Arizona's government has cut payments to doctors by 10 percent and frozen new enrollment in KidsCare, a child insurance program. There are 80,000 children on a waiting list for the service.

Capitalism's World Disorder
Working-Class Politics at the Millennium
by Jack Barnes



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THE MILITANT

Support Wisconsin public workers!

Public employee unions in Wisconsin are saying no to Gov. Scott Walker's plan to impose much higher health-care and pension costs on workers while taking away the unions' right to negotiate contracts with the state. Follow this fight in the 'Militant.'

Militant/Zena Jasper

Thousands demonstrate February 15 in Madison, Wisconsin, against bill to gut union rights.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*'s views. These are expressed in editorials.

Socialists condemn Seoul, Washington war exercises

BY PAUL MAILHOT

The governments of the United States and South Korea will conduct joint military drills on the Korean Peninsula February 28 through April 30. The annual exercises, called Key Resolve and Foal Eagle, will involve some 13,000 U.S. troops and more than 200,000 South Korean military personnel. The North Korean government in Pyongyang has denounced the yearly provocation as "drills to invade North Korea."

The United Nations Command informed North Korea of the military exercises, calling them "defensive" maneuvers. U.S. Forces Korea commander Gen. Walter Sharp, however, said the drills would include "a number of realistic scenarios beyond defeating a conventional attack."

An attempt by Pyongyang to start high-level military talks with Seoul to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula prior to the large-scale maneuvers were aborted February 9 after two days of preliminary meetings broke down. Pyongyang blamed the "persistent confrontation policy of the South Korean group" for the failed talks.

In addition to military pressure, Washington continues to mount pressure on working people in North Korea by denying the country food aid, and urging South Korea and other countries to do the same. In January, Pyongyang asked several countries to contribute food supplies because an unexpectedly harsh winter and poor vegetable harvest had badly affected the food supply. It is a situation made worse because it comes on top of United Nations trade sanctions, the suspension of aid by Seoul, and rising international grain prices.

Philip Crowley of the U.S. State Department said Washington has no plans to resume food aid to North Korea, arguing such aid would likely be "shuffled off to the elites."

Socialist Workers Party leader Steve Clark sent a message on behalf of the SWP National Committee February 16 to the Workers Party of Korea condemning "the announcement by Washington and Seoul that they will conduct joint military exercises. . . .

"We reaffirm our commitment to the Korean people's fight for national reunification and for the withdrawal of all U.S. troops, aircraft, ships, and conventional and nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula and its surrounding air and waters.

U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Byron C. Linder

South Korean warships follow U.S. guided missile destroyers in Foal Eagle exercises, March 2010. Pyongyang calls maneuvers, "drills to invade North Korea."

"As the global crisis of the capitalist order unfolds today, workers, farmers, and youth engaged in struggle for fundamental political rights and against joblessness and rising prices of food and other necessities—from Egypt and Tunisia, to the United States and beyond—are a source of support and solidarity in the Korean people's fight for national unity and sovereignty."

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U.S. Congress extends 'antiterrorism' laws

BY SETH GALINSKY

The U.S. Congress last week extended three provisions of "antiterrorism" laws until May 27. The three sections, which were about to expire, allow the FBI and other cop agencies to conduct roving wiretaps, demand business and library records that they claim are relevant to terrorism threats, and to spy on non-U.S. citizens.

While the bill passed with a large bipartisan majority in both the House and Senate, there was also opposition to the extension from both Democratic and Republican legislators. Eight members of the Tea Party Caucus in the House of Representatives voted against the bill along with 18 other Republicans and most House Democrats. The Senate approved the extension 86 to 12.

Two of the provisions were part of the original Patriot Act, which was passed after the September 2001 attack on the World Trade Center in a drive to undermine the Bill of Rights under the pretext of fighting terrorism. A handful of provisions of the Patriot Act have to be renewed periodically.

President Barack Obama wants these and other provisions extended to at least 2013. Hearings are planned before another vote on extending or making the powers permanent.

"While I agree that law enforcement and national security agencies need the tools necessary to keep America safe from terrorism," said Republican congressman Raúl Labrador of Idaho, a tea party supporter, in defense of his "no" vote. "We need to be sure we are not infringing upon the protections and freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution."

Writing in the conservative magazine *National Review*, Nathan Sales, who says he helped write the Patriot Act as a Justice Department lawyer, claimed that the law "contains strict safeguards to protect civil liberties" because FBI agents "have to appear before a court and convince it that there's probable cause."

The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) courts that review the cops' requests, however, operate in secret and generally rubber stamp government spy operations. By 2008 FISA courts had turned down only five of 19,000 requests.

State and local governments are also seeking more ways to undermine constitutional rights.

The New York State Unified Court System and the New York State Bar Association just released a report detailing the state's broad powers to declare a state of emergency and then "establish curfews, quarantine wide areas, close businesses, restrict public assemblies, and under certain circumstances, suspend local ordinances."

Although the book has the innocuous title of "Public Health Legal Manual," the potential suspension of rights, including carrying out warrantless searches and confiscation of property, is planned not only for the outbreak of disease, but other "man-made catastrophic threats."

Cop brutality in Houston

Continued from front page

driver, came to the meeting from work after hearing about it on the news. He told the *Militant* that he was there because "I want them to do what's right. If police officers committed crimes then they should serve the time for what they have done."

Michael Lewis was one of the first to speak. He told the story of watching Harris County sheriff's deputies stopping traffic while sweeping the parking lot of a Kroger grocery store where he worked. They apparently didn't like being observed. "Next thing I knew I was handcuffed and thrown up against the wall with a gun to my head. They searched and tore up my car causing thousands of dollars of damage," he said. The company then fired him. Several other workers spoke about similar police harassment costing them their jobs.

Arlene Kelly was one of several people who spoke about police killing one of their relatives. Her daughter was killed by the cops 11 years ago as she was walking along a street.

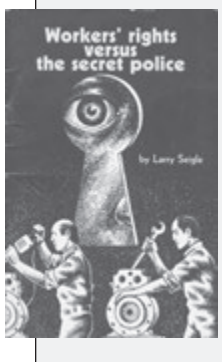
"None of this is new," said Janie Torres. When she introduced herself as the younger sister of José Campos Torres, the largely Black audience applauded loudly, with many people rising to their feet. For decades Torres has been a symbol of police brutality. In 1977 he was beaten by Houston cops who then handcuffed and dumped him into the city's Buffalo Bayou to drown.

"I'm tired of this but I'm not giving up. We can't give up. We have to stick together to fight this," Janie Torres said.

Police brutality is the hot topic in workplaces, schools, and elsewhere throughout the area. Ray Soliz, a 31-year-old mill worker, told the *Militant* that he thought the reason so many people reacted strongly to the video was because it related to their own experiences. His young cousin was shot dead by officers a few years ago when he was walking through a schoolyard. "They said afterwards that they thought the screwdriver he had was a gun. People want justice."

Houston mayor Annise Parker has announced a reorganization of police review bodies "aimed at restoring public trust in the police department." The announcement has been met with calls for further protests.

Workers' Rights versus the Secret Police



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‘Appalled’ at gov’t assault, workers buy ‘Militant’

BY LAURA ANDERSON

MADISON, Wisconsin—As tens of thousands demonstrated here to protest the union-busting bill proposed by Gov. Scott Walker, discussions about the capitalist economic crisis and the need to defend working people convinced many to buy copies of the *Militant* newspaper. Over a couple of days, February 18–19, socialist workers sold some 240 single issues of the *Militant*, along with 40 introductory subscriptions.

Steve Shea got a subscription. His friend Todd Reinhardt, who held a handmade sign that said, “Willing to die for my union rights,” picked up a single.

Shea explained that he and his coworkers are “appalled by what the governor is trying to ram down workers’ throats.

“I want the *Militant* because my political leanings go toward socialist values,” he said. “I used to be a proud Democrat, but over the last five years I got tired of voting and not seeing results.”

A group of five high school students from Milwaukee purchased a *Militant* subscription and the pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism* by Jack Barnes. A young woman in the group, Gabe Charles, explained, “We’ll also be marching in Chicago March 10 for legalization of immigrant workers.”

Jolynn Woehrer stopped by a Socialist Workers literature table to pick up a one-year *Militant* subscription renewal. She had been introduced to the paper at the National Organization for Women convention in Indianapolis a few years ago. “This is a beginning of people taking things into their own hands,” she said.

Participants from a tea party counter rally also stopped by the literature table. Some engaged in discussions with socialist workers and a few purchased the *Militant*.

Militant/Zena Jasper

Some 240 copies of *Militant* and 40 subscriptions were sold February 18–19 at protests in Madison, Wisconsin, against attacks on union rights.

Iowa unionists back rights of public workers

BY HELEN MEYERS

DES MOINES, Iowa, February 22—Some 1,000 unionists rallied at the state capitol here today in support of Wisconsin workers and to protest House Study Bill 117, which would prohibit workers in Iowa from collective bargaining on the questions of health-care costs and wages.

Many unions were represented from throughout the state. Hailey Splettstolssen and Karime Perez are members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 2130 at Cargill’s meatpacking plant in Ottumwa, Iowa. Both are 20 years old and work on the hambone line. Perez told the *Militant*, “We are here because we want our voices to be heard and to make a difference.”

Three workers who are in the carpenters union apprenticeship program from Cedar Rapids—Jonathan Jones, Kevin Jones, and Arturo Martinez—were sent to the rally by their locals.

Kay Gill of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees told the *Militant*, “state workers work hard and benefits were negotiated in good faith and we need them.”

An hour before the union protest began, 75 supporters of the Iowa tea party held a rally across the street from the capitol. Some of their signs read, “Our pockets are not your piggy banks” and “End state employee unions.” At the rally WHO-TV interviewed Roberto Ramirez, a retired John Deere worker and union member, who said he believes his fellow union members need to realize it’s time to make do with less for the good of the country.

Wisconsin union rally slams anti-worker bill

Continued from front page

governor Scott Walker.

Upwards of 70,000 participated during the day, capping a full week of daily street protests. Some 40,000 turned out the day before.

The labor protests are in response to newly elected governor Walker’s proposals to take away public employees’ right to negotiate contracts with the government over benefits and working conditions. The governor’s deficit reduction bill would only allow public workers’ unions to ask for higher wages; at the same time future wage increases would be capped at the federal Consumer Price Index rate of inflation, unless otherwise specified by a voter referendum.

8 percent cut in pay

State workers would have to pay more toward their pensions and health insurance, amounting to an 8 percent cut in pay. The bill also requires public workers to have a new union election every year, prohibits employer collection of union dues, and would end requirements that members of collective bargaining units pay dues. The police and firefighter associations would be exempt from the proposed bill.

The vote on Walker’s proposals has been delayed because of a walkout by Democratic Party legislators who fear that the governor’s measures go too far. The governor needs at least one of the 14 members of the Democratic caucus present for a quorum of the legislature.

Walker says “there is really no room to negotiate” because of the state’s $3.6 billion projected deficit in the upcoming two years. If the bill passes, Walker claims that there will be no layoffs for the 170,000 public workers in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin’s projected budget shortfall is far from the worst in the country. The 2011 state budget for Wisconsin is expected to be 12.8 percent in the red; in Minnesota it’s 24.5 percent; California, 29.3 percent; and Illinois, 44.9 percent. Unionists say that Walker’s anti-labor example could open the way to even harsher measures in other states where Democrats and Republicans are calling for greater “shared sacrifice.”

Carl Adset, a power plant worker and member of Steamfitters Local 601, came with a group of coworkers. He told the *Militant*, “We’re here because they’re going to do the same thing to us. We have to support each other.”

Kasey Maxwell, a teacher from Richland Center, Wisconsin, said that ending collective bargaining rights for everything but wages would tear up union contracts, eliminate seniority, and allow school districts to arbitrarily fire teachers.

While many workers expressed their outrage at government demands that place the burden of the economic crisis on their backs, some trade union officials have been quick to agree that concessions are needed. “We have been clear—and I will restate this again today—money issues are off the table,” said Mary Bell, president of the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC). “Public employees have agreed to Governor Walker’s pension and health-care concessions.”

Marty Beil, executive director of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Council 24, told reporters that workers will do their fair share to narrow Wisconsin’s budget gap.

Democratic Party lawmakers in Wisconsin have made clear they are in favor of the governor’s proposals to substantially increase the health-care and pension costs of public workers.

The more than weeklong protests have drawn workers from many unions, including WEAC, AFSCME, American Federation of Teachers, Madison Teachers, Service Employees International Union, Teamsters, carpenters, painters, plumbers, and other union members, as well as workers in non-union workplaces and family farmers.

Will McIntee, who came with three fellow classmates from Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa, said, “We came because Iowa is facing this also, the budget cuts have to stop, and workers should have the right to use their unions to defend themselves.”

On February 19, for the first time since the protests began, there was a counterprotest in support of the governor’s bill organized by the tea party and a group called Americans for Prosperity. Their rally, held near the union demonstration, drew about 1,000 people. Among the signs the counterprotesters carried were “Workers support Walker,” “Stop Leeching and Start Teaching,” and “We All Make Sacrifices.”

There were some heated debates along the way, but no physical encounters. Some of the issues included: Aren’t public workers overpaid compared to workers in the private sector? Another was that workers should “sacrifice” in order to prevent layoffs and work toward improving the “business climate” by “keeping taxes down.”

On February 17 hundreds of University of Wisconsin students walked out of class in support of the protests.

A few days earlier 100 high school students from Stoughton High School in Madison walked out of classes. By the middle of the week Madison schools were closed because they did not have an adequate number of teachers to staff the classrooms. By Friday, February 18, the three biggest school districts in the state—Milwaukee, Janesville, and Madison—had closed their doors.

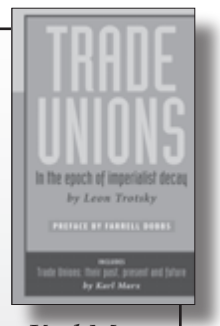
Thousands of students and union supporters have remained inside the capitol building around the clock since February 14. They have organized speakouts, information tables, and food distribution. When the legislature is in session they begin loudly chanting pro-union demands.

Union protests took place in Ohio this past week where Republican governor John Kasich has been seeking to take away collective bargaining rights from public unions. Thousands of union supporters protested in Indianapolis February 21 against a bill that would prohibit labor contracts that require all workers in a bargaining unit to pay union dues.

Betsy Farley, Laura Anderson, and Zena Jasper contributed to this article.

Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

by Leon Trotsky



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ON THE PICKET LINE

Pakistan utility workers in Karachi win back 4,500 jobs

Protests by workers employed by the Karachi Electric Supply Company in Pakistan forced the government January 23 to reverse its order to eliminate 4,500 jobs. After the company announced the layoffs, workers took immediate action, organizing a sit-in over the next four days and five nights outside the electric company's main office in Gizri. Additional protests halted the utilities' operations in other parts of the city.

Under an agreement that privatized the electric utility three years ago, jobs of workers then employed would not be eliminated over this time period. Now that this time period is up, the company was attempting to take advantage of that, noted the Pakistani newspaper *Dawn*.

—Brian Williams

Pakistan airline workers win demands in four-day strike

A four-day strike by workers at Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) ended February 11 with the government promising to meet all their demands. The action led to cancellation of some 400 flights.

The walkout was organized around three basic demands: withdrawal of a Memorandum of Understanding in which Pakistan International Airlines would turn over "lucrative" U.S. and European routes to Turkish Airlines in order to avoid bankruptcy, removal of PIA managing director Aijaz Haroon, and reinstatement of all workers fired by the airline bosses. The workers' negotiating committee also demanded the government prevent Haroon from leaving the country and that he face corruption charges.

On the last day of the walkout, strikers and their supporters withstood an attack by cops and other thugs at the Karachi airport. Police "went into action and beat peaceful protesters," reported *Dawn*. The cops "were supported by a large number of stick-wielding people who had emerged from nowhere," injuring a number of protesters.

—Brian Williams

Workers at Karachi Electric Supply in Pakistan protest December 31 against moves by company to cut 4,500 jobs. Company backed down after workers organized sit-in.

Seattle protest

Continued from front page

be proved the cop acted with malice or in bad faith. Williams's family attorney, Tim Ford, cited evidence the police officer initiated the attack on Williams.

After a mid-afternoon press conference where Seattle police chief John Diaz released the review board's findings, some 200 protesters, including members of Williams's family, Native American groups, and other supporters filled the lobby inside City Hall. Many held signs protesting police brutality.

Juan Jose Bocanegra of the Seattle immigrant rights group El Comité Pro Reforma Migratoria y Justicia Social said, "The Native American and immigrant rights movements should work more closely together in the future."

Two hours later another rally took place at a park across from Westlake Center, a major downtown shopping mall. Several hundred marched to the location where Williams was killed. Many motorists honked in support.

A rally and carve-in took place at Victor Steinbrueck Park on February 19 to honor Williams's life and a collection was taken towards the creation of a totem pole in his memory. More than 200 people attended the event.

Robert Chabolla, member of the Salish Nation of Seachelt in British Columbia, told the *Militant*, "They need to change house from top to bottom—Diaz, the prosecutor, everybody."

New International no. 13

Our Politics Start with the World

by Jack Barnes

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Illinois meeting discusses union fight for safety

BY JOHN HAWKINS

METROPOLIS, Illinois—A town hall meeting here January 26 discussed the fight for safety at nuclear facilities such as the local Honeywell plant. Workers there, who are members of United Steelworkers Local 7-669, have been locked out by the company for more than seven months.

Honeywell's Metropolis works converts yellow cake uranium to uranium hexafluoride (UF_6), a stage in the process of enriching uranium for nuclear power and weapons production. "Most of you don't know about Gore, Oklahoma," locked-out worker Howard Cook told the meeting's participants. "That was a plant similar to ours that made UF_6 just like we do."

Cook said that in 1986, the Gore plant, owned by Kerr-McGee, "overfilled a UF_6 cylinder, killed a man, and sent 80 to 100 people to the hospital."

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) didn't shut the plant down, Cook continued. "The NRC is the people we're supposed to depend on for our safety. And you can see by Gore, Oklahoma, that they don't give a damn."

Others who spoke also pointed to the Gore plant as an example of what the union has fought to avoid here at the Metropolis facility. Many at the meeting echoed Cook's distrust of the NRC, citing its inspectors' cozy relationship with plant management and unreliable plant inspections.

Three months before the 1986 disaster, the NRC renewed the company's operating license, which had expired in October 1982. (The company had been operating for almost three years on a legal loophole that allows plants to continue production if they have applied for license renewal.)

On Jan. 4, 1986, 26-year-old James Harrison was stationed in a scrubbing tower at the plant right next to a cylinder that had been overfilled with 29,500 pounds of uranium hexafluoride—2,000 pounds over the limit. It was being heated to reduce the contents, an extremely hazardous practice that was apparently common procedure at the plant.

At about 11:30 a.m. the wall of the 12-foot-long, 14-ton cylinder split. Much of the UF_6 escaped rapidly, making a dense white cloud. Pushed by the wind, the cloud quickly engulfed the process building and formed a plume expanding outside the plant.

Blinded and barely able to breathe, Harrison stumbled about as hydrofluoric acid began to eat away his lungs.

Kerr-McGee's emergency plans were virtually nonexistent. Coworkers managed to rescue Harrison but there was no oxygen on hand at the plant. They had to drive him eight miles to get a canister from a nursing home. They then drove another 11 miles to the Sequoyah Memorial Hospital, which was unable to adequately treat him. Finally they got him to the Regional Medical Center in Fort Smith, Arkansas, 21 miles away from the plant. It was too late.

Despite the obvious recklessness of plant management, the NRC allowed the Gore plant to continue operating. In late 1992, the agency ordered the closure of the entire facility when another "accident" resulted in contamination of the plant's soil and groundwater.

Finally in August 2005 the NRC approved plans for decommissioning the facility. The estimated closure date is Dec. 1, 2012—close to 25 years since the fatal accident.

Like Kerr-McGee, Honeywell management is hostile to union involvement in enforcing safety. On February 7 the Occupational Safety and Health Administration sought to inspect the Metropolis facility to follow up on a dangerous leak of hydrofluoric acid last December 22. The inspection team was to have included a representative of the Steelworkers union. But Honeywell rejected the Steelworkers participant, although the union has the legal right to be on such inspections.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

March 7, 1986

The overthrow of the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship by the Filipino people is a tremendous victory.

With one of Washington's favorite tyrants driven out, the door now opens for the Filipino people to begin the process of addressing themselves to resolving the massive social and economic problems that burden them.

And the door is also open for achieving the equally necessary goal of independence from U.S. imperialist domination.

For nearly half a century, the Filipino people suffered direct U.S. colonial rule. And, since they won formal independence in 1946, they have continued to suffer U.S. economic, military, and political domination. Throughout his repressive rule, Marcos enjoyed bipartisan support from Washington.

March 6, 1961

The American press recently reported a speech made by Fidel Castro in Havana at the first national conference of the delegates of Councils of Technical Advisers.

The main point in Castro's speech was not reported by U.S. capitalist papers. This is quite understandable, since it was a direct challenge to Kennedy on how to solve the problem of unemployment, a question the Boston millionaire debating champion is not too strong on.

Castro, on the other hand, is able to speak with unusual authority on the subject inasmuch as unemployment before the revolution in Cuba normally affected 25 percent of the labor force. Castro is now able to report Cuba's experience in seeing the problem shift to one of labor shortages a bare two years after the revolutionary victory.

March 7, 1936

Nazi Germany this week ripped the paper bottoms out of the Versailles and Locarno treaties by marching troops, guns and tanks into the demilitarized Rhineland.

This move, long heralded and sedulously prepared, brings French and British imperialism face to face with the alternatives of mobilizing once more against Germany or accepting Hitler's offer of a united front against the Soviet Union.

Faced with the Italian threat to support the Reich in its denunciation of the Locarno pacts, Britain, which has just launched the mightiest armament program the world has ever seen, has given ample indication that it would far sooner make terms with Hitler than risk war at a time when it could have little confidence in the outcome.

Book about U.S. class struggle is presented at Havana Book Fair

BY JOHN HAWKINS AND NAOMI CRAINE

HAVANA—A standing-room-only crowd of some 80 people turned out for the February 13 presentation here of the Spanish-language translation of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes. The event was one of the nearly 800 book launches and other cultural events that were part of this year's 11-day-long Havana International Book Fair.

The panel of speakers included Fernando Martínez Heredia, recipient of the 2006 national prize for social sciences and one of the two Cuban writers to whom this year's book fair is dedicated; Víctor Dreke, one of the generation of revolutionary combatants who brought down the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship in 1959 and currently president of the Cuba-Africa Friendship Association; and Martín Koppel, editor of the Spanish-language translation of the book. Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, chaired the program.

"This book is about the class struggle and the road to socialist revolution in the United States," Koppel said. Fighting anti-Black discrimination and oppression, which are pillars of capitalist rule in the United States, "is the only way to achieve the unity of the working class necessary for a victorious struggle against the ruling capitalist class." The decisive political weight of this question, he noted, is something the leaders of the Bolshevik party and Communist International under V.I. Lenin's leadership in the early 1920s sought to help the young American communist movement understand.

The vanguard place of working people who are Black has been demonstrated over and over in a century and a half of class struggle in the United States, Koppel said—from the revolutionary war to abolish slavery and post–Civil War Radical Reconstruction, through the struggles by farmers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the union organizing drives of the 1930s and 1940s, the mass proletarian-based civil rights movement that overthrew the system of Jim Crow segregation in the South in the 1950s and '60s, and up to today. That history, Koppel said, "is not taught in U.S. schools."

Barnes, who is the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, places Malcolm X within this trajectory. The author shows "that Malcolm was a revolutionary leader of the working class," Koppel said, "something that no one else does." Koppel pointed to examples from Barnes's book of Malcolm's political evolution in the last year of his life.

Militant/Naomi Craine

Panel presenting the Spanish edition of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, February 13 at 20th Havana International Book Fair. From left, Mary-Alice Waters, Fernando Martínez, Víctor Dreke, and Martín Koppel.

'Resilience of toilers who are Black'

Fernando Martínez highlighted a statement by Barnes: "It is the strength and resilience of toilers who are Black, not the oppression, that bowls you over." Martínez noted that a January 1965 interview with Malcolm X by Barnes, originally published in the *Young Socialist* magazine and included in the book, was reprinted in the Cuban journal *Pensamiento Crítico* in June 1968. At the time Martínez was editor of *Pensamiento Crítico* as well as head of the philosophy department at the University of Havana.

"That is the first time I heard the name of Jack Barnes," he said. "We published the interview because we wanted to make the connection between the Black movement and the necessity of a socialist revolution."

Martínez described Malcolm X's attraction to the socialist revolution in Cuba, captured in Malcolm's remark that "the Cuban Revolution—now that's a real revolution. They overthrew the system." Malcolm's "greatest legacy," he said, was throwing "his authority as a fighter behind the need for anticapitalist revolution."

Martínez noted that in Cuba, workers and farmers who are black have a history of revolutionary struggle, including the 19th century slave revolts and wars for Cuba's independence and abolition of slavery, as well as the 1908 founding of a black party, the Independent Party of Color (PIC). Martínez was president of a commission established by the Cuban Communist Party to mark the centennial, in 2008, of the founding of the PIC. Next year, he added, events will be organized to commemorate these struggles as well as the 100th anniversary of the "great massacre of 1912," the bloody suppression of an armed protest led by the PIC.

Today, Martínez said, "one of the greatest responsibilities of the revolution is to ensure that no form of racism continues to exist in Cuba." Such a legacy continues even after the capitalist system that created these forms of oppression has been overturned, "so we have to act accordingly" to combat it.

Martínez also presented a view of the place of the Communist International that is the opposite of what Barnes defends in the book. In the section of Barnes's book titled "What the Bolshevik Revolution Taught Us," the reader gets a concrete picture of how the Comintern under V.I. Lenin's leadership offered invaluable political collaboration to the young communist movement in the United States and worldwide. When a privileged bureaucratic social caste, whose main spokesperson was Joseph Stalin, consolidated its position and reversed Lenin's proletarian internationalist course in the Soviet Union in the late 1920s—imposing defense of its privileged national interests on the Communist International—that aid turned into its opposite.

Martínez, to the contrary, stated that "the Communist International sought to universalize struggles organized against capitalism around the world, just as capitalism was becoming universalized through imperialism. Perhaps [the Comintern] was premature. What is certain is that its ideas and practices turned out to be a failure." Drawing no distinction between the revolutionary course of the Communist International under Lenin's leadership and its counterrevolutionary record under Stalin, Martínez said the Comintern organized on the basis "of dictates, not of understanding, not of an appreciation of complex diversities."

'Importance for young generations'

"This book is important not only for Cubans who lived under capitalism and experienced race discrimination here in Cuba," Víctor Dreke noted, "but for young Cubans who never lived through that stage of our history."

Dreke, who fought in the 1956–58 revolutionary war that brought down the Batista dictatorship, was the head of the units of the Revolutionary Armed Forces combating the U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary bands in the Escambray mountains after the 1959 victory. He was second in command to Ernesto Che Guevara in the Cuban internationalist mission aiding anti-imperialist forces in the Congo in 1965, and headed the Cuban combatants aiding the independence movement in Guinea-Bissau in 1966–68. He has held various diplomatic responsibilities in Africa over the years.

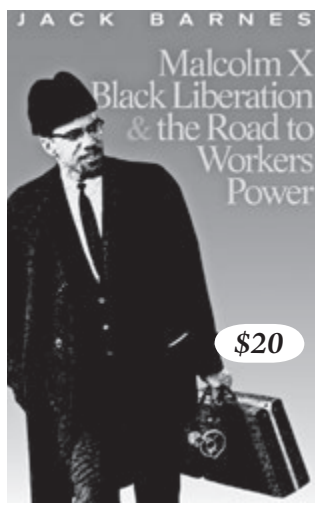
Recalling his 2002 U.S. speaking tour on his book *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*, published by Pathfinder Press, Dreke said that experience helped him "understand that, while before 1959 there was a lot of racial discrimination in Cuba, it was never comparable to the discrimination that our black-skinned brothers and sisters

Continued on next page

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes

"This is a book about the dictatorship of capital and the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat. A book about the last century and a half of class struggle in the United States—from the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction to today—and the unimpeachable evidence it offers that workers who are Black will comprise a disproportionately weighty part of the ranks and leadership of the mass social movement that will make a proletarian revolution. . . ."



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Civil war in Libya

Continued from front page
from airplanes."

In Tripoli, the capital, some troops also rebelled and protesters began assaulting government buildings and police stations. Gadhafi responded by calling in airstrikes against the population and rebel army units. Mercenaries imported from other African countries fired indiscriminately into crowds. Gadhafi ordered the execution of any soldier refusing orders.

Press reports put the death toll at more than 1,000 people from the bloody crackdown Gadhafi has ordered. He vowed to fight to the death. One resident of Tripoli told the *Guardian* newspaper the attitude of people now is, "We're not scared any more, there's no going back. If we stop now Gadhafi will massacre everybody."

Gadhafi's ministers of security and of justice resigned, as did Libya's entire UN delegation and diplomatic personnel in several other countries. Two air force colonels flew planes to Malta, asked for political asylum and said they had refused orders to fire on the population. The al-Zuwayya tribe threatened to block oil exports to the European Union if the repression was not stopped. Oil workers struck at several sites.

In a February 21 speech Gadhafi's son, Saif al-Islam Gadhafi, echoing his father's threat, declared, "We will fight to the last bullet." He noted "at this moment there are tanks being driven by civilians in Benghazi."

Libya was dominated by several European colonial powers until independence in 1951 when it became a constitutional monarchy. The 1959 discovery of oil greatly increased the coffers of King Idris I, but little trickled down to working people. In 1967 the king did nothing to defend Arab nations when the government of Israel launched its "six-day war" and stole Arab territory, provoking mass demonstrations in Libya.

In 1969 Gadhafi led the Free Unionist Officers in a military coup that abolished the monarchy. The new government declared its goal of "freedom, socialism, and unity" by seeking a third road between capitalism and communism. It pledged to fight for Arab unity and in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle, to overcome backwardness and tribalism, and end class exploitation.

Gadhafi banned all political parties

"We're not scared any more. There's no going back," say protesters against Gadhafi.

and ended parliamentary democracy in favor of "revolutionary" committees that supposedly guaranteed popular participation in running the country. In reality he ruled directly, backed up by the army with slots in the command structure for each of the most influential tribes. The country's considerable oil income allowed him to establish schools, hospitals, and other social necessities and better living standards for some workers, while ensuring that he and his family became the wealthiest capitalists in the country.

Beginning in the mid-1990s Libya's oil revenues began to decline and its ability to cushion the blows on working people were diminished. Popular unrest grew, with some Islamist groups taking up arms against the government. They were crushed brutally. In 1996 Gadhafi ordered the slaughter of 1,200 prisoners at Abu Salim prison in Tripoli. The current protests began when relatives of those inmates in Benghazi sought to organize a commemoration, according to *Time* magazine.

In 2003, following the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Gadhafi made peace with the imperialists, declaring he would not produce nuclear weapons and volunteering to help them track down which semicolonial countries had such weapons programs under way. He opened the door to greater imperialist penetration of the economy. Then U.S. president George W. Bush took Libya off the "state sponsors of terrorism" list. By 2008 the U.S. State Department began calling Gadhafi "a person of personality and experience."

The world capitalist economic crisis has drastically reduced oil revenues and his ability to keep the population in check. Unemployment is higher than in some other North African countries and food prices and rents are very high. Libya imports 75 percent of its food. While it claims to have the highest living standard in Africa, the reality is that wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few.

Protests in Bahrain

In Bahrain, a country in the Arab-Persian Gulf made up of some 30 islands, demonstrations are growing in strength against the reign of Sheikh Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifah, whose family has ruled since 1783. Although Shiite Muslims are at least two-thirds of the population, they are a minority in the country's parliament and banned from joining the police and army.

According to Reuters, Shiite Bahrainis are paid less than Sunnis and often have to work temporary jobs. Most live in rural areas where one-third to a half the residents are jobless. They have less access to education and health care. Non-Bahrainis, who make up about 50 percent of the workforce are often granted better jobs and living conditions. Shiites charge that Khalifah offers them citizenship in return for their loyalty. Many Pakistanis serve in the police.

The protests in Bahrain demand the sheikh dissolve the current government and fire the prime minister, and more rights. While the majority of those demonstrating have been Shiites some Bahrainis who are Sunni have also joined.

Bahrain is a banking and financial center and home to the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet.

Presentation at the Havana Book Fair

Continued from page 6
in North America faced."

While racial prejudices don't disappear overnight, Dreke said, "in Cuba racism began to be ended politically, economically, and socially on Jan. 1, 1959, when the revolution led by Fidel [Castro] took power." The new government implemented "laws that attacked racism at its roots."

"Today we don't forget our roots. But in Cuba we can't fall into thinking we are white or we are black—we are Cubans," he added.

Dreke pointed to the significance of Malcolm X's political evolution and his understanding that "the problems could not be solved by uniting only blacks" but all the oppressed. Malcolm visited Africa and met with revolutionaries there, listened to their opinions, and his views changed. "Malcolm advanced toward the idea that what is needed is to change the capitalist system of exploitation," he said. "He became a leader of the working class in the United States."

Exchange on affirmative action

During the discussion period, one participant pointed to affirmative action policies in the United States in employment, housing, and university admissions. He argued strongly that "affirmative action is needed in Cuba today" to address inequalities that remain in jobs and education.

Dreke replied that revolutionary leaders, including Fidel Castro, Ernesto Che Guevara, and Raúl Castro, have addressed the need to confront the legacy of discrimination. But he said he opposed establishing racial quotas in hiring or school admissions in Cuba.

Because of the concrete history of Cuba, in which black, mulatto, white, and Chinese revolutionaries fought and bled together, "we are united, we are all human beings," he said.

Another member of the audience continued this exchange. He said he thought

Militant/Rebecca Williamson

Participants at presentation of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*

establishing affirmative action quotas reinforced racial divisions in the United States. In Cuba, he added, affirmative action was needed but it should be for those living in the most impoverished neighborhoods, not based on race.

In the United States, Koppel replied, "affirmative action programs in employment, housing, and education grew out of the mass civil rights battles led by workers and farmers who were Black" following World War II, and the impact of those conquests in the working class and union movement as workers sought to resist the employers' mounting assaults in the 1970s and '80s. Those measures strengthened the working class and unions, helping to break down barriers for Blacks, women, and others facing discrimination and to unite working people in struggle.

The U.S. rulers, however, have used what they call affirmative action—a component of "diversity"—to foster the integration of a large and growing section of Blacks into a broader "meritocratic" layer of the upper middle-class and professionals in the United States whose class interests are alien to workers of any skin color. It's the layer Obama comes from, Koppel said. "Bourgeois 'affirmative action' is being used to deepen divisions in the working class and among the oppressed rather than reduce them."

Forty-five copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* were sold to participants in the meeting. Altogether, more than 200 copies of the book—in Spanish, English, and French—were purchased during the course of the book fair.

The presentation of this Pathfinder title was part of a number of book fair programs on the history and struggles to end anti-black discrimination in Cuba and worldwide. Panels were organized under the title "International Year for People of African Heritage." Book presentations included Spanish-language titles such as *Black Skin, White Masks* by Frantz Fanon, *Mali: A Road toward Pan-African Integrationism*, *History of the Haitian Revolution*, *Cuban Deities of African Origin*, *Martí's Black Mother*, *The Racial Question in Cuba*, *Toward an Afro-Ecuadoran Narrative*, and a special feature on "Memory of Slavery" in *Caminos*, magazine of the Martin Luther King Center in Havana.

Rebecca Williamson and Doug Nelson contributed to this article.

Fidel Castro: 'We will never return to slave barracks'

Below is an excerpt from How Far We Slaves Have Come!*, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for March. It contains the speeches presented by Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro at a July 26, 1991, rally in Matanzas, Cuba, celebrating the 38th anniversary of the opening of the Cuban Revolution. Beginning in November 1975 and over the next 15 years, the Cuban government, in response to a request from the government of Angola, sent hundreds of thousands of volunteer troops to that country to help defeat the invading armed forces of South Africa's apartheid regime.*

In March 1988 South African troops suffered a decisive military defeat at Cuito Cuanavale, forcing them to withdraw from Angola. The outcome contributed to independence for Namibia, freeing Mandela from prison after 27 years, the unbanning of the African National Congress in South Africa, and the defeat of the racist apartheid system. *Copyright © 1991 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

Gil/Juventud Rebelde

Volunteers from the Cuban armed forces in Angola, 1981. More than 375,00 Cuban volunteers in Angola between November 1975 and May 1991 helped defeat South Africa's invading troops, speeding the fall of the apartheid regime.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FIDEL CASTRO

Black people of South Africa not only have had to confront apartheid, they have also had to confront the most brutal inequality and political repression, and they have had to confront the cruelest economic exploitation. They have had to confront these three great tragedies.

Because of this I believe there can be no greater cause in our era than the one headed by the ANC [African National Congress], Comrade Mandela, and the many other capable and brilliant leaders of that organization, several of whom we have had the privilege of meeting here in our country.

Today those in the West are trying to ingratiate themselves with Africa, trying to ingratiate themselves with those who hate apartheid. But the fact is that apartheid was created by the West, by the capitalist and imperialist West.

The real truth is that the West supported apartheid; they supplied it with technology, countless billions in investments, and vast quantities of arms; and they also gave it political support. No, imperialism did not break ties with apartheid, it did not blockade apartheid; imperialism maintained and continues to maintain excellent relations with apartheid. It was Cuba that had to be blockaded,[1] Cuba, where the vestiges of apartheid—that is, racial discrimination—disappeared a long time ago. Cuba had to be blockaded as punishment for its revolution, as punishment for its social justice—but never apartheid. They took some half-hearted economic measures against apartheid, which did not have the least significance. . . .

[W]e have our dignity and our independence, our bravery and our heroism, even in the difficult times in which we live—and we will have them even if times become yet more difficult.

What are they going to tell us about? About the past? About capitalism? [*Shouts of "No!"*] About private property? About large landed estates? About corporations? [*Shouts of "No!"*] About imperialism? About neocolonialism? Do we want to hear about all that garbage? [*Shouts of "No!"*] What else can I call all that?

So what are they going to tell us about? About the days when there were beggars?

What are they going to tell us about? About the days of prostitution? [*Shouts of "No!"*] About the systematic plunder of the public treasury? About cheap politicking? About the merciless exploitation of the workers? About landless peasants, or peasants paying rent, a percentage of what they produced?

What are they going to tell us about? About that society of racial discrimination? Where in some provincial capitals whites walked on one side and Blacks on the other, on different streets, or on different paths in the park. I don't remember whether it was in Santa Clara or Villa Clara where these things went on; I can imagine the exclusive spots here. It took different forms.

What are they going to tell us about? About discrimination? About prostitution and all the vices of that society? About barefoot children begging and not attending school? About illiteracy? About women working as domestic servants and in open or de facto prostitution? [*Shouts of "No!"*] They better not come to us with stories about their capitalism, their market economies, and all that madness, because we already know about that, and I think we remember it quite well. . . .

We can never experience a tighter blockade and more suffering than what our ancestors suffered, because today we are owners of the land; now it belongs only to the people. Today we are owners of the factories; now they belong only to the people. The people own the means of production and everything else. And we will solve our problems, we will solve them however we must. But we will never return to the slave barracks! [*Shouts and applause*]

They may threaten us with their sophisticated weapons. Perhaps they don't believe they are dealing with a courageous and intelligent people that knows how to fight. And if we fought fourteen thousand kilometers away—however far it was—if we got into the trap at Cuito Cuanavale that the enemies had created and that turned into a trap for them, then here, on our coasts, in our countryside, in our mountains, in our cities, in our canefields, in our ricefields, in our swamps, we will fight as we fought at Cuito Cuanavale. [*Applause*] We will fight even harder than we fought at Cuito Cuanavale, and we will resist for more years than we resisted in Angola, until victory. [*Prolonged applause*]

This is what we can say about the sophisticated weapons of imperialism. And if we weren't among decent people, we could tell them what they should do with their weapons. [*Laughter and applause*]

Our army has millions of men and women ranging from teenagers to the elderly. [*Applause and shouts of "For sure, Fidel, give the Yankees hell!"*]

What are they going to frighten us with, their so-called smart weapons? We are smarter than those weapons and smarter than those who own them. And our weapons can't be underestimated either, above all because behind every one of them is a patriot and a revolutionary.

1. The U.S. government imposed an economic, commercial, and financial embargo on Cuba in the early 1960s.

March BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Build solidarity, sell the 'Militant'!

Continued from front page

of workers, farmers, students, and others in many parts of the country. More solidarity actions are planned, and more are needed.

The *Militant* calls on its readers to solidarize with public workers protesting in Wisconsin, and aid their struggle by getting the socialist newsweekly into the hands of as many workers as possible—in Wisconsin and across the country.

Take a day off work and talk to your coworkers; hop in a car and get to the protests in Wisconsin. Hundreds of workers there have already bought copies of the *Militant* and dozens have become new subscribers. More readers builds solidarity and strengthens the fight.

The *Militant* helps explain that the employers and their government are trying to boost sagging profit rates by squeezing more out of working people, cutting our wages, speeding up our jobs, making us pay more for health care, and eliminating pensions. This is a *bipartisan* attack. While the governor of Wisconsin is a Republican, similar assaults are being organized against working people in California, Illinois, New York, and other states where the Democratic Party is in control.

If the labor movement is to turn back the attacks of the employers and their government, solidarity must become the order of the day. The bosses can be effective in pitting working people against one another by underscoring that some public workers have benefits while other workers do not.

The unions can cut across that message by championing the entire working class, and fighting to represent the interests of those who are the worst paid and worst treated.

Democrats and Republicans alike, and some trade union officials, say that public workers in Wisconsin should give up their wages in order to "share in the sacrifice." Socialists don't agree. While the capitalist governments in Washington and in every city and state pronounce large banks and other businesses as "too big to fail," working people are expected to bear the burden of the depression and social crisis of the capitalist system on our backs.

Working people can get no help from the twin representatives of the employer class—Democrats and Republicans. Workers need a labor party that speaks out clearly in the interests of working people and that will help to organize the fight for relief from the ravages of the capitalist crisis, for jobs, better working conditions, and guaranteed health care and retirement. Working people need a labor party in the fight for political power.

With this issue the *Militant* is building a solidarity campaign for the public workers in Wisconsin and elsewhere who are the main targets of the employers' assaults now.

Workers, farmers, and youth who would like to join teams to go to Wisconsin and sell the *Militant* to many interested fighters can call any of our organizing centers in the Midwest: Chicago (773) 890-1190; Des Moines (515) 255-1707; and Minneapolis (612) 729-1205. Or meet up with socialist workers from other areas who will be going to Wisconsin by contacting one of our distributors listed on page 8.

—Paul Mailhot, Editor

Egypt's military demands strikes end

Continued from front page

agers as their representatives.

Workers at Misr Spinning and Weaving, a state-owned factory in Al Mahalla Al-Kubra 60 miles north of Cairo, went back to work February 20 after winning a 25 percent wage increase and dismissal of a corrupt manager. Workers there are also asserting their right to have a union independent of the Egyptian Trade Union Federation, which is run by supporters of deposed ruler Mubarak. An army tank was stationed outside the main gate during the strike in an attempt to intimidate the workers. Workers at Mahalla have a history of standing up to the bosses, conducting strikes in 2006, 2007, and 2008.

Boss: Strikes starting to scare us

After the ouster of Mubarak "everything was about to go back to normal," complained garment boss Magdi Tolba to the *Financial Times*, "but our problem nowadays is workers and employees—everybody has started to ask for his personal benefits and this is really starting to scare us." While most textile mills are state-owned, most garment shops are privately owned.

"We have made it clear we will discuss the employees' benefits, but definitely they cannot choose which management they want, this is not open for discussion," Hisham Ramez, a Central Bank official, told the *Times*.

The movement to oust Mubarak has also spurred other protests. Some 2,000 family members of political prisoners demonstrated February 16 in Cairo in front of the attorney general's office demanding their release. There are thousands of political prisoners in Egypt, some imprisoned since the 1981 assassination of President Anwar Sadat, Mubarak's predecessor.

In an action February 18 in Alexandria celebrating Mubarak's ouster, many of the 200,000 marchers carried signs with photos of imprisoned relatives and called for their release. The day before, 45 prisoners in Arish, North Sinai, launched a hunger strike to protest being held without trial.

Al Ahram reported that hundreds of peasants in Qamh Province are protesting to demand irrigation water for their fields.

Working people in Egypt do not have their own party. Various bourgeois parties, which represented a weak opposition to Mubarak, are now maneuvering to put themselves in the best position to lead, or at least be part of, a new capitalist government.

One of the main groups is the Muslim Brotherhood, many of whose members were imprisoned under the Mubarak regime. It announced it is setting up a new political party the "Freedom and Justice Party," open to all Egyptians.

Brotherhood member Mohsen Radi told the press that the group does not "object to the election of women or Copts to cabinet seats" but that it "does not believe it would be appropriate" for women or Coptic Christians to head the party or the government.

A rally of hundreds of thousands in Tahrir Square took place February 18 to celebrate Mubarak's ouster and demand the army free political prisoners, remove members of Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP) from the government, and lift the emergency laws. A featured speaker was Sheikh Yousef al-Qaradawi, anally of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Muslim cleric: 'Be patient'

"I call on everyone who has stopped working, gone on strike, or who is at a sit-in, that they support this revolution" by returning to work, he told the crowd. "Be patient."

Another capitalist figure, Mohamed ElBaradei, returned to Egypt as the protests against Mubarak were under way. ElBaradei heads a coalition of capitalist parties called the National Association for Change. He is a former director of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency.

"The army plays a central role," ElBaradei told the press, "We need the army to defend the early stages of democracy." He says he is for a government of "national unity" that would include technocrats and a military official.

Egyptian press reports February 21 said the Military Council had replaced some members of the cabinet. As minister of tourism it named a leader of the Wafd Party, which had functioned as a loyal opposition to Mubarak; a National Association for Change member as deputy prime minister; and a member of the Tagammu Party as minister of social solidarity and social justice. The Tagammu Party includes members of the former Communist Party of Egypt. The key ministries of justice, foreign affairs, and interior, however, would remain in the hands of Mubarak's NDP.

Unions need new leadership, new struggle methods

Following is an excerpt from the political resolution "Prospects for Socialism in America," which was adopted by the 27th National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party, held in August 1975. It appears in The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions *by Jack Barnes. The excerpt takes up the ruling-class assault on public employees in the 1970s, when Democrats and Republicans in city and state governments began cutting wages, benefits, and many jobs in order to solve a "budget crisis." While much has changed in politics since, many of the challenges the resolution points out for class-conscious unionists remain.* *Copyright © 1981 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

For public employees, every struggle comes up against a series of obstacles. Antistrike and antilabor laws are used against them. They are weakened by the lack of broad labor unity mobilized in their support. They are crippled by the past failures of their leaderships to support the struggles of the oppressed communities. And they must confront not only the government as boss, but the Democratic and Republican parties to whom the unions have been subordinated by the misleadership of American labor.

Public employees are today the main target of the ruling-class offensive to drive down wages, working conditions, social welfare, and social services, and to weaken and demoralize American labor. They are more vulnerable to attack than the powerfully organized industrial workers, who create the profits for America's rulers. Successful efforts by the public workers to fight back and overcome these obstacles could provide an example and constitute a turning point for the entire American working class.

But this will require a new kind of leadership, new consciousness, and new methods of struggle. The transformation of American labor into a class-conscious social and political force will be heralded both by massive social struggles outside the unions and by the rise of a class-struggle left wing in the union movement. Such a formation will strive to provide leadership for all types of social struggles by the oppressed. It will chart a political course of class independence for the unions, breaking millions of workers and their allies away from the two-party system of the bourgeoisie and its agents.

Even in a country like the United States where the workers comprise the vast majority of the population, the working class cannot succeed in wresting power from the capitalist rulers and beginning the socialist reconstruction of society without strong support from its allies. At the same time, these allies—the oppressed minorities, women, small farmers, craftsmen, proprietors, the GIs, and the student youth—all have a life-and-death stake in the socialist revolution.

The traditional allies of the workers have been primarily the small independent producers, craftsmen, and proprietors, both urban and rural. This still held true during the radicalization of the 1930s when the farm population was about 30 percent of the total. However, the large-scale changes wrought since then in the structure of industry, agriculture, and the labor force through the growth and further monopolization of American capital have radically reduced the size and altered the configuration of these classical petty-bourgeois strata.

The composition and character of the allies of the proletariat have undergone significant changes as the structure and composition of the proletariat itself have altered dramatically. But these changes in no way lessen the importance of understanding the independent needs and struggles of these allies or of winning them to the side of the socialist revolution. To the contrary, clear and concrete answers must be given to their demands if the revolutionary workers are to mobilize full striking power against the forces of capital. In so doing, they will eliminate the central obstacle before the coming American revolution—that is, the divisions within the working class.